

REMARKS

Claims 6 and 7 are now in this application. Claim 1 is canceled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 2-5 and 8-9 were previously canceled. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Foreign Priority

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority in the Office Action dated February 6, 2002. Applicants will submit a certified copy of the priority document in the immediate future in order to perfect the claim for foreign priority.

Reasons for Entry of Amendments

At the outset, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered into the Official File in view of the fact that claim 1 is canceled, automatically placing the application in condition for allowance.

In the alternative, if the Examiner does not agree that this application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purpose of appeal. This Amendment was not presented at an earlier date in view of the fact that Applicants did not fully appreciate the Examiner's position until the Final Office Action was reviewed.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 6 and 7 are allowed. As noted below, claim 1 is canceled. Accordingly, all claims of this application are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Hara et al. '162 in view of Kuroda '169 and Lejeune '800.

Claim 1 is canceled. Since only allowed claims 6 and 7 remain pending, the present application is in condition for allowance.

Thus, the present application is ready for issue.

Conclusion

The stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance. However, if there are any remaining issues, the Examiner is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 CFR 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application. The required fee of \$950.00 is attached hereto.

Serial No. 09/655,842
Amendment dated May 12, 2004
Reply to Office Action of November 13, 2003

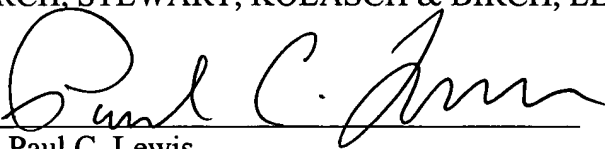
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Group Art Unit 1733
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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0229-0608P
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